

VZCZCXRO3660  
PP RUEHBC RUEHDE RUEHIHL RUEHKUK  
DE RUEHGB #1005 0821202  
ZNY CCCCC ZZH  
P 231202Z MAR 07  
FM AMEMBASSY BAGHDAD  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0327  
INFO RUCNRAQ/IRAQ COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L BAGHDAD 001005

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/23/2017

TAGS: PGOV IZ

SUBJECT: HEWAR LEADER SALIH AL-MOTLOQ ASKS FOR US SUPPORT  
TO CHANGE THE GOI

Classified By: Deputy Chief of Mission Daniel Speckhard per 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: In a meeting with the DCM on March 20, Sunni Hewar leader Salih al-Motloq said Iraq needs a new, liberal government now because Iraqis are fed up with religious parties and the government's inability to provide security and services. Motloq said the three years before the next election were too long to wait and asked for the U.S. Government to help him form a cross-sectarian government that could "impose" security. The DCM stressed that any change in the GOI must happen constitutionally and that now is not a good time to think about changing the government when the GOI and U.S. are focused on improving security in Baghdad and other key hot spots. He suggested Motloq focus on supporting the Baghdad Security Plan (BSP) and drafting key laws, and to return to his effort for political change only after the violence is under control. END SUMMARY.

-----  
Motloq: Time For A Change in the GOI  
-----

¶2. (C) Motloq opened the meeting by describing what he and his party, Hewar, have done for the past eight months. Motloq said his party chose to be part of the "positive opposition" and to remain quiet. However, he continued, the religious parties in the government allowed the situation in Iraq to worsen to the point where he felt Hewar must get involved to change the GOI. Motloq said "three years until the next election are too long to wait."

¶3. (C) Motloq said that Iraq needs to be run by a liberal government that can "impose" security and the law. He said Iraq's political parties cannot change the GOI alone, and asked for the USG's help. Motloq opined that Iraqis are fed up with religious political parties. He said he is trying to form a national salvation front that already has support from 32 political groups. He said the national salvation front has members from all ethnic groups, including nonsectarian Shia, and from parties inside the Council of Representatives (CoR) and outside the political process.

¶4. (C) Motloq acknowledged that any change in the GOI would have to be through the CoR and claimed he had the support of nearly fifty percent of the CoR members. He added that most of the Sunni insurgency, with the exception of Al Qaeda in Iraq, would support his government. He said he would bring back many former military officers, who know how to deal with militias and would clean up the MOD and MOI.

-----  
Security Before Political Change  
-----

¶5. (C) The DCM responded that the USG shares the principles of cross-sectarian parties and agrees with many of the

challenges that Motloq described, such as Iraqis' frustration with the lack of security and services. He stressed, however, that any change in the government must come through democratic processes. Furthermore, the DCM emphasized that now is not the time to think about political change because Iraq needs security first, and the U.S. is focused on supporting PM Maliki's government as it tries to reduce the violence in Baghdad and other hotspots.

¶6. (C) Motloq said he was scheduled to meet the PM in the next few days and asked the DCM for advice on how to proceed.

The DCM recommended Motloq focus on supporting the PM and the BSP and explained that if violence decreases, the political climate will be more hospitable for secular parties like Motloq's. The religious parties, he said, thrive in the violence because people turn to them for protection. The DCM told Motloq to focus on the legislation and political processes that are of importance right now, like the provincial powers law and constitutional review.

KHALILZAD